THE

EVIDENCE;

OR,

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THE DUTY AND IMPORTANCE OF TRAINING CHILDREN.

Proverbs, 22, 6.—*Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.*

(Continued.)

THE 3d particular now offers itself to our consideration, which was to point out the best means to effect this object; viz. training up children in the way they should go.

WITH the best means of effecting this object I would include, not only the instructions which are to be given, but the various circumstances attending them; such as the time and place and manner, of training children.

AND 1st. Parents who would train their children in the way they should go, must in some measure be prepared for the undertaking. It is not necessary they should wait for perfection before they set themselves about this business, for this they will never attain; but it is highly requisite they should have information, and be religiously disposed themselves. If an officer should take it upon him to train a company of men with a view of perfecting them in warlike manœuvres, and at the same time have no knowledge of the art himself, we must readily see that his labors would be fruitless, and time would be lost without advantage. In like manner parents without information will do very little in affording instructions to their children. It is hence highly necessary that heads of families have correct ideas respecting this most interesting and incumbent duty. Their minds, at least ought to be settled in the first principles of sound information, or their children will reap no advantage from them. It is, however, very rare, in a country like our own, signalized by the light of the gospel, that people of adult age, who have families, are so totally deficient in acquired abilities, as not to be capable, if disposed, of giving their children some important lessons of instruction. The principal difficulty is indisposition. Were all done which parents are capable of doing in the religious and moral instruction of the youth the face of society would almost instantly put on a more favorable aspect. Let men have a feeling sense of the duty and, the neglect of it would be less general. There is, however, one point which in this place ought not to be overlooked, which is absolutely indispensible, I mean the example parents set before their children. If parents take it upon them to train their children in the way they should go, and then immediately on this

violate their own maxims by immoral conduct, might any considerable benefit be expected? Such example would be telling the children that the instructions were without meaning. And if the child should gain the idea that the parent meant nothing by the rules given, but dispised them himself, the tendency would be to produce similar feelings in his own mind, and of course the object of instruction would be defeated. Parental instruction, to render it efficacious, must be united with example. The former cannot succeed without the latter. We have matters of fact sufficient to confirm this point.

Some men I have known tyrannically severe, on hearing their children make use of profane expressions, and yet would use in the hearing of the children the vilest expressions themselves. The children of such parents almost forever, instead of being deterred by threatening or punishment, follow their example. In this case, the children do not gain the idea from the parent that the practice is sinful, but only unpleasant to hear from children, so that when out of sight of the parent, they are fearless of an oath and without restraint. Precept given to a child without carrying conviction to the mind of the child, that it was dictated by principle, will in all probability be disregarded. So that if the parent can trample on the laws he makes for his child, the child will most cerstainly view and treat them with contempt.

It is desirable that our minds be duly impressed with this sentiment since it is verified by so many facts transpiring around us. And let us rest in this truth, that withou example, training children will prove abortive. With the forgoing sentiments preserved in our recollection we may proceed to a second observation, that the business of training children in the way they should go must be commenced in season.

In cultivating trees and plants, their first growth must be carfully nursed. A little crawling insect is sufficient to give a fatal wound to the stalk in its first shooting forth. The similitude has a eorrect application to children.

The early stage is the most critical. If less can be done for the instruction of the child when its mind is first opening; yet it is not less difficult to do that little well, than to do more in a subsequent period. At any rate, nature dictates, that the business of training admits of no delay after the subject becomes capable of receiving an impression. If the first few years are misimproved in training children in the way they should go, the best opportunity will be out of your hands. Procrastination of the business increases the difficulty of doing any thing in more than compound ratio.

The work of training crouds upon the parent before he is aware of it. And if the seed time is neglected, where are you to look for the harvest? If nothing is done in the spring the fields of summer will not be clad with verdure, nor the autumn vintage replenish your store.

Early efforts in training children are indispensible, if we would secure the usefulness and virtues of manhood, and raise up an inhabitant for the kingdom of heaven.

This brings us to observe in the 3d place that the work of training children must be pursued with consancy.

You know that the man of business who keeps his affairs in order, always sees something to do, and is never ont of employ. Should you suggest to him that his unremitted application to the duties of his calling were in expedient, he would tell you of many inconveniences which would occur, if he should abate his constancy of pursuit.

In training children in the way they should go, constancy is far more necessary, not only because the work is of higher magnitude, than the simple management of any temporal interest; but because if training the child in the way he should go is suspended—he will of his own accord, in all probability take the way he should not go.

In the season of your letting down of the watch, the child may sally off far in the bye paths, where you may find it difficult to trace his steps and recover him to his former standing. It is vastly easier to prevent mischief, than to relieve it after it is committed. Inconstancy, therefore in training children in the way they should go, cannot be tollerated on principles either prudent or safe. Neither the text, nor the general current of God's word countenance any inconstancy in an affair of this magnitude.

This introduces us to a 4th observation, that the duty of training children in the way they should go requires perseverance.

Supposing a man commences a piece of work which if completed would place him in circumstances peculiarly eligible, and be of immence utility to the world, yet, if he should stop short of bringing his object to maturity, the commencing of the work would be of no avail. The difficulty attending the man's undertaking would be this—he did not persevere. Perseverance would have raised him to independent circumstances. To train children there must be perseverance if we would secure the object hoped for and contemplated. What if the parent lays down some wholesome lessons of instruction; what if to make short work of the business he gives out all his mind at once? Will this amount to training the child? No, as well might the officer gabble over the words of command to his company, thinking it a sufficient discharge of his duty to the soldiery. Should a millitary officer do this, he would instantly be discharged with disgrace and infamy. Training the child must be pursued with unremitted perseverance. The contrary would come materially short of the whole of parental duty. While the child is under the parent's control his work is never done. However he may succeed in the first attempt, his perseverance must receive no check. What if the first endeavors are apparently fruitless? What if the child is refractory and stubborn, must the parent retreat from his duty? must he omit other efforts for the child's good? Solomon says not. Eli was a good man, and probably, when his children were young, counselled them; and yet he failed of the ultimate object, and for the want of persevering and vigorous measures. His family went to destruction. In training children in the way they should go, there must be a holding out to the end. In every case there must be perseverance; there must be line upon line, precept upon precept. There must be instruction in abundance. This leads us to observe,

5. That in training children in the way they should go, we must make use of the word

of God to guide them. The scriptures must be the treasure-house from which we bring our instructions. Human aids are not to be despised; they are to be coveted, so far as they correspond with the scriptures; and yet they are never to be relied on as the unerring standard. The Bible is adequate to every purpose of instructing and guiding the young mind. This book was given by the inspiration of God and is profitable for instruction, that the man of God may be thoroughly furnished to every good work, or to the right discharge of every duty. Should you desert this book and teach your childred to do so likewise, you will never see them in the way they should go. For this treasury of knowledge in the education of youth there is no substitute. What have those parents done in training their children to whom the oracle of God was not committed? Have they bequeathed to their children any correct system of moral conduct, much less of religion? Cast a look over heathen countries and see the astonishing disparity between them and your own. The parents being ignorant and vain in their imaginations, their children are trained to the most abominable absurdities. From their parents they are taught cruelty, revenge, the indulgence of uncontrolled lust and passion, contempt of life and the liberty of disposing of it, in such way, and time as they may deem proper.

Those in christian countries who, have abandoned the scriptures as the man of their counsel, and resorted to the standard of infidelity, have made a most wretched barter even on the score of education. They have let go from their hands the best, the only means of training up their children in the way they should go. With all the aids of infidel philosophy, parents will be unable to train their children even to the rules of common morality. The moral tendency of these maxims, is to throw off restraint, and give free indulgence to all the vile passions of the heart. There is no adequate system by which to train children in the way they should go except that contained in the scriptures. These are adequate for every purpose. It must, however, be remembered, that in guiding children by this rule parents must have just conceptions of the religion they contain. If they take the scriptures only to answer worldly purposes, and overlook their grand import and design the principal object will be defeated. If you would train children in the way they should go, by the help of the bible, you must have a correct view of the several doctrines and duties therein contained. If the doctrines are mutilated, if the lessons you collect from this book are distorted from their genuine simplicity, the instructions you will impart will be extremely prejudicial to training in the right way. If you would avail yourselves of all the advantages of God's word, in the education of your children, you must receive the doctrines and duties in the true spirit and intention of them, as designed by their glorious author.

6. In training up children in the way they should go, it is necessary, that parental government be mild, efficient and uniform. In this matter much is depending. If the parent is passionately and unreasonably severe, he will loose both the confidence and affection of the child, and in this way defeat his own endeavors. A mild government is on every account to be preferred. Parents are not to provoke their children to wrath, but to train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Though mildness is an eminent trait in the business of training children, yet the go-

vernment must be efficient. If the parent retreats from his own rules and gives way to aggression with impunity, the reins of control will presently be out of his hands, and he will become the dupe of his children, instead of holding the rule over them. If the parent yields the ground to the child, he must become a tyrant in order to regain it. The extremes of laxness on the one hand and severity on the other are to be carefully avoided.

In the whole business, the heads of the family must be agreed. Disunion in the family not only confuses the child, but tends to make him judge incorrectly respecting right and wrong. There can be very little of right training in a family, where the heads of it are disagreed. This I have no fear of hazard in holding out as a maxim. But

7. As to train children in the way they should go is a most interesting undertaking, it is necessary that it be pursued with prayer. Whatever parents may do in training their children, yet if they omit praying with them and for them, they will omit one of the best means of training them. Prayer in the family tends to solemnize children, and keep conscience awake—It tends also to produce conviction in their minds that their parents act from a sense of duty and the fear of God. Prayer gives great weight to instruction and reproof, and helps parents to govern themselves and govern their children. Beside God is delighted, with parents who in faith bring their children to him, in prayer and leave them at the throne of grace. Such parents are held by God in everlasting remembrance. If this is done, with the temper of obedience, perseveringly and uniformly, the blessing of Abraham will rest on their households forever. This leads us to the

4. And last general head proposed, which is to hold out motives and encouragements to excite parents to engage in the duty of training up their children in the way they should go. Under this particular I feel my utter incapacity to do justice to the subject. The motives and encouragements are of such wide extent, they are so numerous and exuberant on all sides and from all worlds, and from eternity, to make beginning is difficult. This, however, you will notice, there is a duty, a training due from the parent to the child, which if omitted, is not unfreqently, followed with destructive consequences. If you will examine the history of those who, by their crimes have brought themselves to an ignominous end, you will find them more generally ruined in their education. Their parents who were the means of their existence, whose indispensible duty it was to train them in the right way, were the very agents in stamping the brand on them, which they have carried with them to the gallows. The present dregs and nuisances of society, have generally originated, from sinks of wickedness, sanctioned by a degenerate parentage. Their minds when they first began to open, were fed with poison, which in process of time broke forth in disloyalty and defiance of God and man. As therefore, you would save your children from disgrace and wretchedness, you must train them early in the way they should go. Your children which are now small and hanging about you, are capable, by your fidelity under God, of rising and becoming ornaments to society—of doing honor to themselves and leaving an example for the benefit of posterity. So much bequeathed to your children, the bless-

ing of God attending your endeavors, is not this inducement too powerful and engaging to be resisted? You who are parents weigh the inducements, in all their bearings in relation to yourselves, to society, to the church of God. I might say you have more than encouragements, to this duty, you have a promise, that if you are faithful in covenant keeping you shall have a blessing on your offspring. And you will see the promise in the text. If you under God, are faithful in training your children, when they are old they will not depart from the way directed. You have all the inducements to engage in this work, which time and eternity can present. These motives are spread out by the God who gave you breath, in view of the tender plants growing around you. If then you would wish your children to avoid the paths of death, of ruin in both worlds, as you desire, their felicity here and hereafter, as you desire to meet them at the right hand of Jesus on the great day, can there be stronger inducements than those before you to train your children in the way they should go?

The inducements are strong as the worth of the soul, and eternity, and the infinite God can make them. I shall now conclude with two inferences, which grow directly from the subject. And

1. If it be a solemn and pressing duty bending on parents to train up their children in the way they should go, then it is the duty of parents to give up their children to God in covenant. Giving up their children in covenant to God, is a duty upon the same principle, as training. The ancient saints, in obedience to God, gave up their children, and in this thing are an example to us on whom the ends of the world are come. Jesus. Christ encouraged parents in faithfulness to give up their children to the Lord. Believing parents, for others would not have been disposed, brought their children to Jesus and he took them up in his arms and blessed them, and said, "Of such are the kingdom of heaven."

To every believing parent Jesus gives an invitation to come to him with their children for his blessing. All God's word is in favor of giving children up to God, as well as training them, for him; and both are supported by the same arguments. If you do not give up your children to the Lord, you will not train them. The great neglect of this duty in the world should have no influence on us. And lest you should go away with doubts about this matter I would add, by asking you whether you ever knew or heard of a dying parent, with his children standing about him lament, that when they were little children he gave them up to God; you have heard parents lament their unfaithfulness; but never so much as once that they devoted their children God in infancy. This sight has never yet been seen. If training and giving up children to God is a duty then infant baptism is right. And as I said before, so say I now, that no parent on a dying bed and in his last speech, ever lamented with penitential sorrow, that by faith, he had given away his children in baptism, to Jesus. Weigh these truths, and may God bring on you the blessings of his chosen.

SKETCH OF WILLIAM BATES. D.D.

Dr. Bates was born in 1625. He was educated in the University of Cambridge, where he took the degree of B. A. 1647, and of D. D.

1660. His graceful mien and comely person were adapted to command respect in that public station, for which Providence designed him. His concern lay not only with *mean men;* he was to stand before *kings.* It is well known in what relation he stood to one,* as long as was convenient for certain purposes; and how frequent occasion he had of appearing (never unacceptable) before another † His grave and amiable aspect commanded both reverence and love. A constant serenity reigned in his countenance; a visible sign of the divine calm in his breast. His natural endowments were much beyond the common rate. His apprehension was quick and clear! his reasoning faculty acute and ready; his judgment and penetration solid; his wit never light or vain, though facetious and pleasant. His memory was admirable; nor was it impaired to the last. He delivered his sermons *memoriter*, which, as he said, he continued to do, when in years, partly to teach some, who were younger, to preach without notes. He was reputed one of the best orators of the age. His voice was charming his language always, elegent; his style inimitably polite, yet easy, and to himself the most natural.

His learning was a vast treasure, and his knowledge of books so extensive, that one of the brightest ornaments of the establishment said, " were he to collect a library, he would as soon consult Dr. Bates, as any man he knew." He was well versed in the politer parts of learning, which rendered his conversation highly entertaining to the more intelligent part of mankind, and his company was much coveted by persons of quality. He was honoured with the friendship of the Lord-keeper *Bridgman.* The Lord Chancellor *Finch* and the earl of *Nottingham* had a particular respect for him. Archbishop *Tillotson* held him in high esteem, and maintained an intimacy with him to the end of his life. If interest would have induced him to conformity, he could not have wanted a temptation. He might have had any bishopric in the the kngdom, if he would havedeserted his cause. His integrity, modesty, and peaceable temper are conspicious in the close of his farewel sermon, Aug, 17, 1662, (the Sabbath preceding the general ejectment of the dissenting clergy by the act of *uniformity*)—" I know you expect me to say something as to my nonconformity. I shall only say thus much; it is neither fancy, faction, nor humour, that makes me not comply; but merely the fear of offending God. And if, after the best means used for my illumination; as prayer to God, discourse, and study, I am not able to be satisfied concerning the lawfulness of what is required, it be my unhappiness to be in error, surely men will have no reason to be angry with me in this world, and I hope God will pardon me in the next.'

His piety was very conspicuons, and his private conversation so instructive and quickening, in reference to religion and godliness, that no man of ordinary capacity could hear his most familar discources, wihout great advantage, or great negligence. To place religion in a morose sourness was far from his practice, judgment, and temper.

* *Charles II. whom he was chaplain.*

† *King* WILLIAM *III. To whom, at his accession to the throne, he presented the congratulatory address of the dissenting ministers. He also presented their address of condolence on the death of the Qneen.*

But his mind was most intent on divine things; and his discourse on other subjects was interwoven with religion, and centered in it; especially what is most vital and essential to it. "I never knew any one (says Mr. Howe) more frequent or affectionate in the admiration of divine grace, upon all occasions, than he was, as none had a deeper sense of the *impotence* and *depravity* of human nature. Into what transports of admiration of the love of God have I seen him break forth! How easy a step did he make it from earth to heaven! With what flights of thought and affection was he wont to speak of the heavenly state! Even like a man more a skin to the other world than this."

He was ejected from St. Dunstan's in the west, London. He was many years one of the Tuesday lecturers at Salter's hall, where he preached to a thronged assembly, In the latter part of life he exercised his ministry at Hackney with great success, He died in 1699, aged 74. Mr. Howe's funeral sermon for him (founded on John xi. 16. *Let us also go. and die with him*) contains a most passionate lamentation over him, in a strength of language characteristic of that great writer.

Panoplist.

ORTON.

On Contentment.

CONTENTMENT is the greatest bliss,
'Tis purest sweetest happiness.
But 'tis not riches that can buy it,
Nor kings, nor princes that enjoy it,
No, he who bears the name of clown,
Has more than he who wears the crown.
The most confin'd oppressive slave
Has more than his oppressors have,
And he who begs his daily bread,
Without or cover for his head,
Or clothes that serve to keep him warm,
Or shoes to keep his feet from harm,
Has full as much, and often more,
Than they who have them all in store.
'Tis therefore plain, nor pow'r nor wealth,
Nor ease nor freedom, crown'd with health,
Nor gayest scenes of wanton mirth,
Nor all the joys of earthly birth,
Nor all that language can express,
Or heart conceive of mortal bliss,
If realiz'd and close combin'd,
Can give contentment to the mind,
What is contentment? (some may say)
Where to be found? By night and day,
Who would not search the world all over,
This best of blessings to discover?
The answer's short, nor need you roam,
If found at all 'tis found at home.

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